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**Groups of countries in special situations: follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries**

**Egypt:* draft resolution**

## Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

*The General Assembly*,

*Recalling* the Istanbul Declaration[1] and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,[2] adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May 2011, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, in which the Assembly called upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Programme of Action, and recalling also the Political Declaration adopted at the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,[3] held in Antalya, Turkey, from 27 to 29 May 2016, and endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 70/294 of 25 July 2016,

*Reaffirming* the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action of overcoming the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries to eradicate poverty, achieve the internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the least developed country category,

*Reaffirming also* its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition

* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China.

[1] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9–13 May 2011* (A/CONF.219/7), chap. I.

[2] Ibid., chap. II.

[3] Resolution 70/294, annex.



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that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

*Reaffirming further* its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

*Reaffirming* the Paris Agreement,[4] and encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[5] that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

*Reaffirming also* the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito, Ecuador, from 17 to 20 October 2016,[6]

*Recalling* the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and its guiding principles,[7] and recalling also its promotion of regular disaster preparedness, response and recovery exercises, at the national and local levels, with a view to ensuring a rapid and effective response to disasters and related displacement, including access to essential food and non-food relief supplies, as appropriate to local needs,

*Recalling also* its resolution 72/231 of 20 December 2017 on the follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries,

*Recalling further* Economic and Social Council resolution 2018/26 of 24 July 2018 on the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,

*Recalling* its resolutions 59/209 of 20 December 2004 and 67/221 of 21 December 2012 on a smooth transition for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries,

*Welcoming* General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and emphasizing the importance of its full and timely implementation,

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade

[4] Adopted under the UNFCCC in FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21.

[5] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[6] Resolution 71/256, annex.

[7] Resolution 69/283, annex II.

2011–2020[8] and on the implementation, effectiveness and added value of smooth transition measures and graduation support;[9]

2. *Calls upon* the least developed countries, their development partners, the United Nations system and all other actors to further strengthen the global partnership for development for the least developed countries in all priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action[2] in order to ensure the timely, effective and full implementation of the Programme of Action during the remainder of the decade, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[10] the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,[11] which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, supports and complements it and helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, the Paris Agreement[4] adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030[7] and the New Urban Agenda;[6]

3. *Invites* the private sector, civil society and foundations to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in their respective areas of competence, in line with the national priorities of the least developed countries;

4. *Recalls* the decision contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that effective linkages will be made with the follow-up and review arrangements of all relevant United Nations conferences and processes, including on the least developed countries, underlines the importance of strong synergy in the implementation of the recently adopted agendas and the Istanbul Programme of Action at all levels, and encourages coordination and coherence in the follow-up of their implementation;

5. *Reaffirms* that the least developed countries, as the most vulnerable group of countries, need enhanced global support to overcome the structural challenges they face in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in this regard calls upon the international community to prioritize and strengthen support from all sources to facilitate the coordinated implementation and coherent follow-up and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in the least developed countries;

6. *Recognizes* that significant additional domestic public resources, including at the subnational level, supplemented by international assistance, as appropriate, will be critical for the realization of sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda acknowledge the centrality of domestic resource mobilization, underscored by the principle of national ownership, and also recognizes that, while the least developed countries have made considerable efforts to mobilize domestic resources and attract private investment, further progress is needed;

7. *Expresses* its concern that bilateral official development assistance to the least developed countries remains far from the target set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, while noting the reversal of the decline of official development assistance to the least developed countries in 2017, and expressing its appreciation to those few countries that have met or surpassed their commitments to 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to developing countries and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent

[8] A/73/80-E/2018/58.
[9] A/73/291.
[10] Resolution 70/1.
[11] Resolution 69/313, annex.

of gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries, urges all others to step up efforts to increase their official development assistance and to make additional concrete efforts towards the official development assistance targets, reiterates that the fulfilment of all official development assistance commitments remains crucial, calls upon official development assistance providers to fulfil their respective official development assistance commitments to the least developed countries, and encourages official development assistance providers to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.2 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries, while reiterating that an important use of international public finance, including official development assistance, is to catalyse additional resource mobilization from other sources, public and private;

8. *Encouraged* by those who are allocating at least 50 per cent of their official development assistance to the least developed countries;

9. *Welcomes* continued efforts to improve the quality, impact and effectiveness of development cooperation and other international efforts in public finance, including adherence to agreed development cooperation effectiveness principles;

10. *Calls upon* the developing countries, guided by the spirit of solidarity and consistent with their capabilities, to provide support for the effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in mutually agreed areas of cooperation within the framework of South-South cooperation, which is a complement to but not a substitute for North-South cooperation;

11. *Expresses its concern* that merchandise exports of the least developed countries have continued to decline for several years, resulting in a considerable decline in their share of goods and services exports, which stood at 0.89 per cent in 2017, and thus further movement away from the target of 2 per cent of global exports called for in the Istanbul Programme of Action and target 17.11 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and calls upon the least developed countries and their development partners to take the measures necessary to reverse this trend, with a view to achieving the target of the Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda;

12. *Urges* the least developed countries and their development partners to make use of existing initiatives and programmes, such as the relevant ministerial decisions of the World Trade Organization on duty-free and quota-free market access for the least developed countries and on preferential rules of origin for those countries, as well as aid for trade, reiterates its commitment to increase aid-for-trade support, in particular for the least developed countries, strives to allocate an increasing proportion of aid for trade to the least developed countries, in accordance with development cooperation effectiveness principles, welcomes additional cooperation among developing countries to this end, and encourages the least developed countries to mainstream trade in their national development plans;

13. *Recognizes* that the least developed countries face significant infrastructure gaps, including in the areas of transport, energy, and information and communications technology, and reaffirms the need to promote quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure and to enhance infrastructure connectivity with concrete actions, maximizing synergies in infrastructure planning and development;

14. *Emphasizes* that the acute energy gap faced by the least developed countries is a severe constraint on their structural transformation, stresses that special attention should be given to the least developed countries, including throughout the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (2014–2024), with a view to ensuring the realization of the objective of access to affordable, reliable, sustainable

and modern energy for all by 2030 and to addressing the infrastructure needs of the least developed countries;

15. *Recognizes* the significant potential of regional economic integration and interconnectivity to promote inclusive growth and sustainable development in the least developed countries, and stresses the need to strengthen regional cooperation and regional trade agreements to improve connectivity and competitiveness, increase productivity, lower transaction costs and expand markets;

16. *Expresses its deep concern* that a number of least developed countries are in debt distress or at high risk of debt distress[12] and that the ratio of debt service to exports has worsened sharply, rising from 4.1 per cent in 2008 to almost 10 per cent in 2017, underlines the urgent need to address the debt problems of the least developed countries, and stresses the need for the international community to remain vigilant in monitoring the debt situation of the least developed countries and to continue to take effective measures, preferably within existing frameworks, when applicable, to address the debt problem of those countries, including through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief, debt restructuring and sound debt management, as appropriate, for the multilateral and bilateral debt owed by the least developed countries to creditors, both public and private, reiterates its commitment to work through existing initiatives, such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, and reaffirms the importance of transparency in debt management;

17. *Recognizes* that maintaining sustainable debt levels is the responsibility of the borrowing countries, while acknowledging that lenders also have a responsibility to lend in such a way that it does not undermine a country's debt sustainability, recalls the need to strengthen information-sharing and transparency to make sure that debt sustainability assessments are based on comprehensive, objective and reliable data, encourages Member States to work towards global consensus on guidelines for debtor and creditor responsibilities in borrowing by and lending to sovereigns, building on existing initiatives, and underlines that the debt sustainability framework for least developed countries should systematically take into account their structural constraints and longer-term investment requirements for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

18. *Expresses its concern* that foreign direct investment flows to the least developed countries contracted by 17 per cent in 2017 compared with 2016, with continued concentration on extractive and related industries, and underlines the need to take the measures necessary at all levels to further accelerate foreign direct investment in the least developed countries;

19. *Encourages* the least developed countries, in accordance with their national plans and priorities, and with the full support of their development partners, to develop their capacities to track financial transactions, administer taxation and regulate customs and to redouble their efforts to substantially reduce illicit financial flows by 2030, with a view to eventually eliminating them, including by combating tax evasion and corruption through strengthened national regulation, and also encourages the United Nations and other relevant international bodies to help to support these efforts, in accordance with their respective mandates;

20. *Recalls* target 17.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, in which the General Assembly decided to adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries, and underlines the need for its early implementation, invites the Secretary-General, in his capacity as the Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to retain the issue of investment

[12] See International Monetary Fund, Debt Sustainability Analysis: Low-Income Countries.

promotion regimes for the least developed countries in the agenda of the Board, with a view to enhancing the overall effectiveness of the support provided by the United Nations system to increase the flow of foreign direct investment to the least developed countries and the ability of those countries to attract such investment, and in that context takes note of the initiative of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States jointly with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the International Labour Organization, the Enhanced Integrated Framework and the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies to set up a capacity-development programme for the investment promotion agencies of least developed countries, and calls for financial support to operationalize this programme;

21. *Welcomes* the operationalization of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries and the inauguration of its headquarters in Gebze, Turkey, which signify the achievement of the first Sustainable Development Goal target, target 17.8, takes note with appreciation of the contributions that Bangladesh, India, Norway and Turkey, have made, as well as the pledges made by the Philippines and the Sudan, and invites Member States, as well as international organizations, foundations and the private sector, to provide voluntary financial contributions and technical assistance to the Technology Bank to ensure its effective operation;

22. *Expresses its deep concern* that, owing to significant capacity constraints, the least developed countries are disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, including persistent drought and extreme weather events, sea-level rise, coastal erosion, salinity intrusion, glacial lake outburst floods, ocean acidification and the rise in frequency, as well as the impact, of natural and man-made disasters, which further threaten food security and efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development, and expresses its concern that women and girls are often disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change and other environmental issues;

23. *Recognizes* the synergies between the implementation of the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, acknowledges the importance of continued support for and international cooperation on adaptation and mitigation efforts and on strengthening resilience, stresses the necessity of adequate and predictable financial resources from a variety of sources, including public and private ones, highlights the specific needs and special circumstances of developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, recognizes that effective disaster risk management contributes to sustainable development, and in this regard underlines the importance of strengthening disaster risk reduction and early warning systems in order to minimize the consequences of disasters;

24. *Recalls* the objectives of the Istanbul Programme of Action of: enhancing good governance at all levels by strengthening democratic processes, institutions and the rule of law; increasing efficiency, coherence, transparency and participation; protecting and promoting human rights; and reducing corruption and strengthening the capacity of the Governments of the least developed countries to play an effective role in their economic and social development;

25. *Recognizes* the importance of developing domestic capital markets in the least developed countries, which can help channel the growing pool of domestic savings towards productive investments, reaffirms the commitment to enhance international support in developing domestic capital markets in developing countries, in particular in the least developed countries, and reaffirms its commitment to work

to strengthen capacity-building in this area, including through regional, interregional and global forums for knowledge-sharing, technical assistance and data-sharing;

26. *Reaffirms* that achieving gender equality, empowering all women and girls and the full realization of the human rights of all people are essential to achieving sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, and reiterates the need for gender mainstreaming, including targeted actions and investments in the formulation and implementation of all financial, economic, environmental and social policies in the least developed countries;

27. *Underlines* the need to reduce the vulnerability of the least developed countries to economic, natural and environmental shocks and disasters, as well as climate change, and to enhance their ability to meet these and other challenges by strengthening their resilience, and in this regard stresses that it is important that all countries and other actors work together to further develop and implement concrete measures, on an urgent basis, at the national and international levels so as to build the resilience of the least developed countries to withstand economic shocks and mitigate their adverse effects, to withstand and overcome the adverse effects of climate change, to enhance sustainable growth and protect biodiversity and to withstand natural hazards in order to reduce the risk of disasters, as agreed upon in the Istanbul Programme of Action;

28. *Also underlines* the importance of improving the coordination and effectiveness of resilience-building initiatives for the least developed countries by leveraging existing measures at the national, regional and global levels to respond to various types of disasters and shocks, as elaborated in the report of the Secretary-General;

29. *Congratulates* those countries that have met the criteria for graduation from least developed country status, notes with appreciation that several least developed countries have expressed their intention to reach the status of graduation by 2020, invites those countries to start the preparations for their graduation and transition strategy, and requests all relevant organizations of the United Nations system, led by the Office of the High Representative, to extend enhanced necessary support in this regard, in a coordinated manner;

30. *Acknowledges* that the graduation of a country symbolizes its considerable long-term socioeconomic progress, prevailing over the structural handicaps to socioeconomic development, and that it also presents many challenges for graduated countries, which continue to face vulnerabilities to various shocks and crises;

31. *Invites* development partners to continue to provide dedicated support measures for graduated countries, including capacity-building and technical assistance, to enhance access to new sources of financing, including blended financing of domestic and international resources, in order to address post-graduation challenges and to support progress towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals;

32. *Invites* the least developed countries and development partners to integrate graduation and smooth transition strategies into their respective national development and aid strategies, as appropriate;

33. *Notes* with appreciation that some development partners have extended some of the benefits specific to the least developed countries to countries that have graduated, taking into account the challenges they continue to face, and invites all development partners to strengthen their support for graduation and smooth transition so that graduating and recently graduated countries will not face any disruption in their development trajectory;

34. *Decides* to request the Committee for Development Policy, as part of its comprehensive review of the criteria for the identification of the least developed countries, to review the procedures and time frame for graduation, taking into account the need of some graduating countries to align their transition strategies with their national development plans, following the decision of the General Assembly in its resolution 59/209 to take note of the recommendation of the Committee for Development Policy to graduate a country from the list of the least developed countries;

35. *Recognizes* that the activities relating to the least developed countries carried out within the Secretariat need to be further coordinated and consolidated in order to ensure the effective monitoring and follow-up of the Istanbul Programme of Action, led by the Office of the High Representative, and to provide well-coordinated support to realizing the goal of enabling half of the least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020;

36. *Takes note* of the work of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for the least developed countries, led by the Office of the High Representative, notes the steps taken by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the High-level Committee on Programmes in supporting the coordination and follow-up of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action on a system-wide basis, and reiterates its invitation to the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the Chief Executives Board, to include the implementation of the Programme of Action in the agenda of the Board and to make substantive contributions to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and its preparatory processes;

37. *Recalls* paragraph 157 of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 on holding a Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in order to make a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action and to decide on subsequent action, and decides to convene the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries at the highest possible level, including Heads of State and Government, in 2021 for a duration of five working days, with the following mandate:

(a) To undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action by the least developed countries and their development partners, share best practices and lessons learned and identify obstacles and constraints encountered as well as actions and initiatives needed to overcome them;

(b) To identify effective international and domestic policies in the light of the outcome of the appraisal as well as new and emerging challenges and opportunities and the means to address them;

(c) To reaffirm the global commitment to addressing the special needs of the least developed countries made at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework;

(d) To mobilize additional international support measures and action in favour of the least developed countries and, in this regard, to formulate and adopt a renewed partnership between the least developed countries and their development partners;

38. *Decides* to convene two meetings of the intergovernmental preparatory committee, one towards the end of 2020 and one early in 2021;

39. *Also decides* to take a decision on the organizational aspects, date and venue of the Conference and on the venue, duration and dates of the preparatory committee meetings at its seventy-fourth session;

40. *Further decides* that the meeting of the preparatory committee will be preceded by two regional preparatory meetings, one in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa and the other in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in the context of the regular annual session of each Commission, with those regional meetings to be supported by broad-based and inclusive country-level preparations;

41. *Emphasizes* the importance of country-level preparations as a critical input to the preparatory process for the Conference and in the implementation of and follow-up to its outcome, and calls upon the Governments of the least developed countries to submit their reports in a timely manner;

42. *Stresses* that the Conference and the preparatory activities should be carried out within the budget level proposed by the Secretary-General for the years 2020 and 2021;

43. *Decides* that the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States will be the focal point for the preparations for the Conference, in accordance with mandates given by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/227 of 24 December 2001, to ensure that those preparations are carried out effectively and to mobilize and coordinate the active involvement of the entire United Nations system and other international organizations;

44. *Requests* the organizations of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the regional commissions, the specialized agencies, the funds and programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and other relevant international and regional organizations, to provide necessary support and to contribute actively to the preparatory process and the Conference itself;

45. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure, as appropriate, the full involvement of resident coordinators and country teams in the preparations for the Conference, in particular in the country-level and regional preparations;

46. *Strongly encourages* Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, major groups and other donors to contribute in a timely manner to the trust fund in support of activities undertaken by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to support the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the participation of the representatives from the least developed countries in the high-level political forum on sustainable development of the Economic and Social Council as well as in other relevant forums and the preparatory process of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and in this regard expresses its appreciation to those countries that have made voluntary contributions to the trust fund;

47. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution and the Istanbul Programme of Action, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-fourth session, under the item entitled "Groups of countries in special situations", the sub-item entitled "Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries";

48. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session a progress report on the implementation, effectiveness and added value of smooth transition measures covering both graduating and recently graduated countries, including new and dedicated support measures to graduated countries in moving forward on their development path and initiatives taken by the United Nations system to support countries during their graduation from the least developed country category.